

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01

ACDA-05 TRSE-00 /066 W

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R 0111031Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3630

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7839

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,TH

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT ON THE THAI DOMESTIC SCENE

REF: BANGKOK 6782

1. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT HELD A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH A U.S. NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE DELEGATION MAY 1. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS ON THE THAI DOMESTIC SCENE, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO FARMERS AND THE MONARCHY.

2. KHUKRIT CITED THREE WARS THAT THE THAI ARE FACING: ON POVERTY, AGAINST THE INSURGENCY, AND PERHAPS COUNTERING AN EXTERNAL THREAT. THE PRINCIPAL PROGRAM OF HIS GOVERNMENT IS TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC LOT OF THE FARMERS. HE SAID THAT HEAVY RURAL INDEBTEDNESS HAS ACCUMULATED OVER THE YEARS, THAT MONEY LENDERS HAVE FORECLOSED LOANS, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THAI HISTORY THERE IS LANDLESSNESS.

3. KHUKRIT WANTS TO RETURN SOME OF THE PROFITS
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ON RICE TO THE FARMERS. HE MENTIONED THAT THE RICE PREMIUM, AN EXPORT TAX, HAD PREVIOUSLY GONE INTO GENERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES AND HAD BEEN USED FOR SUCH PURPOSES AS CONSTRUCTING OFFICES.

4. KHUKRIT WAS HOPEFUL THAT HIS \$125 MILLION PROGRAM TO GIVE FUNDS TO CANTON COUNCILS (REFTEL) WOULD BEGIN TO REDRESS INCOME DISPARITY. THE PROGRAM GIVES FUNDS TO CANTON COUNCILS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. HE SAID HE HAD ORDERED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE COUNCILS' DECISIONS ON HOW TO USE THESE FUNDS.

5. ASKED ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE MONARCHY, KHUKRIT POINTED OUT THAT THE CHAKRI DYNASTY HAD BEEN DEDICATED TO POPULAR WELFARE FOR OVER 200 YEARS. HE SAID THAT THE PRESENT KING WORKED EXTREMELY HARD AND HAD ENHANCED THE REPUTATION OF THE MONARCHY. HE IMPLIED THAT THE KING'S POPULARITY IN RURAL AREAS WAS GREATER THAN IN BANGKOK, WHERE SOME LEFTISTS SINCE OCTOBER 1973 HAVE BEGUN QUESTIONING THE MONARCHY AS AN INSTITUTION. HE NEVERTHELESS STRESSED THE GREAT REVERENCE THAT THAI PEOPLE EVERYWHERE RESERVE FOR THE KING.

6. KHUKRIT CITED THE KING'S POSITIVE ROLE DURING MOMENTS OF POLITICAL CRISIS, AND SAID THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE IN CHAOS WITHOUT HIM.

7. ADDRESSEES SHOULD BE AWARE THAT REMARKS THAT FOREIGN OFFICIALS MAKE TO THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE ARE PRIVILEGED. THEY SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE DISSEMINATED FURTHER OR REFERRED TO IN MESSAGES OR CONVERSATIONS.
MASTERS

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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